

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing custom-engineered products, comprising:

providing an online catalog on a computer, the catalog having an unavailable product/attribute selector to select an unavailable product or attribute that is not offered for sale;

receiving a selection of an unavailable product/attribute that requires one or more of engineering and testing before it may be produced.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

suggesting an existing/standard product based upon and as a replacement for the selection.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining a resource cost for the unavailable product/attribute.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

assigning a category of design requirements to the unavailable product/attribute.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:

determining a resource cost for the unavailable product/attribute;

assigning a first category to the unavailable product/attribute if the resource cost is relatively lower;

assigning a second category to the unavailable product/attribute if the resource cost is relatively higher.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:

transmitting a request for the unavailable product/attribute to an address associated with the assigned category.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
transmitting the request to a manufacturing facility for the unavailable product/attribute if it is assigned to a first predefined category.
8. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
transmitting the request to an engineering department for the unavailable product/attribute if it is assigned to a second predefined category.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing a list of available products in the online catalog.
10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
obsoleting an available product by moving it from the list of available products to a list of unavailable products.
11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving an order of an available product and transmitting a request to a manufacturing facility.
12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the unavailable product/attribute selector comprises a list of unavailable products/attributes.
13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
classifying an item in the list of unavailable products/attributes.
14. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the unavailable product/attribute selector comprises an online form.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for providing available and unavailable products/attributes and for operating an associated computer system having at least one of each of the following:

a central processing unit (CPU);
a visual interface in communication with the CPU;
a memory in communication with the CPU; and
a user interface selection device in communication with the CPU; the method comprising:
displaying a list of available products that can be ordered from a provider, stored in a memory of the computer system, on a visual interface of the computer system; and
providing an unavailable product/attribute selector in the computer system to select one of a product and an attribute that cannot be ordered from the provider.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:

storing in a memory of the computer system a list of unavailable products/attributes.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

displaying the list of unavailable products/attributes on a visual interface of the computer system.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

storing in a memory of the computer system a category of design requirements associated with the unavailable products/attributes.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 further comprising:

receiving a selection of an unavailable product/attribute via a selection signal from a user interface selection device of the computer system; and

displaying a resource cost to of the unavailable product/attribute on a visual interface of the computer system.

20. (Original) The method of claim 15 further comprising:
receiving a selection of an unavailable product/attribute via a selection signal from a user interface selection device of the computer system; and
identifying, by a CPU of the computer system, one or more available products, from the list of available products, that has similar characteristics to those of the selected unavailable product/attribute; and
displaying the identified one or more available products on a visual interface of the computer system.

21. (Original) The method of claim 15 further comprising:
generating a specification for a product in response to receiving, by a CPU of the computer system, a selection signal from the user interface selection device of an unavailable product/attribute.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:
transmitting from a CPU of the computer system via electronic transmission a signal representative of the specification.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:
providing a list of resources in a memory of the computer system; and
allocating the list of resources using a CPU of the computer system, the allocation based, at least in part, upon the specification.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising using a CPU of the computer system for:
comparing the specification to the list of available products;
selecting an available product, from the list of available products, that has similar characteristics to those of the specification; and
identifying a base material common to the specification and the selected available product.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising:
providing a list of base materials associated with the available products in a memory of
the computer system.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24 further comprising:
transmitting from a CPU of the computer system via electronic transmission a signal
representative of the base materials identified in the identification step.

27. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising using at least one CPU of
the computer system for:

comparing the specification to the list of available products;
selecting an available product, from the list of available products, that has similar
characteristics to those of the specification; and
determining a variance between the specification and the selected available product.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, further comprising using a CPU of the
computer system for:

assigning a category of design requirement to the variance.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, further comprising:
transmitting from a CPU of the computer system via electronic transmission a signal
representative of the specification to an address associated with the assigned category.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
receiving a selection of an unavailable product/attribute via a selection signal from the
user interface selection device;
storing a resource cost heuristic in a memory of the computer system;
calculating a resource cost for the unavailable product/attribute based on a selected
unavailable product/attribute and the resource cost heuristic using a CPU of the computer
system.

31. (Original) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
receiving a selection of an unavailable product/attribute via a selection signal from a user interface selection device of the computer system; and
using a CPU of the computer system for:
calculating a resource cost for the unavailable product/attribute;
comparing the resource cost to a list of available resources;
making an accept/reject decision.

32. (Original) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
storing in a memory of the computer system a list of unavailable products; and
moving an item from the list of available products to a list of unavailable products using a user interface selection device of the computer system.

33. (Original) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
receiving a selection of an unavailable product/attribute via a selection signal from a user interface selection device of the computer system; and
transmitting from a CPU of the computer system via electronic transmission a signal representative of a request for quotation.

34. (Currently Amended) A method of offering products, comprising:
providing a set of available product data records in a memory, each available product data record containing a specification for an associated available product that can be ordered from a seller;
providing a set of unavailable product data records in the memory, each unavailable product data record containing a specification for an associated unavailable product wherein each of the unavailable products cannot be ordered from the seller;
displaying the set of available product data records and the set of unavailable product data records on a visual display;
receiving an input, via a user interface selection device, of a user selection from the set of unavailable product data records.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34 wherein at least one of the unavailable product data records is a variance from an available product data record.

36. (Original) The method of claim 34 wherein at least one of the unavailable product data records represents an existing, but untested, product.

37. (Currently Amended) A method for offering custom products, comprising:
receiving into a processor an input, via a user interface selection device, of a specification for an unavailable product that cannot be ordered from a seller;
executing a resource costing module in the processor to determine the resource cost for creating the unavailable product;
transmitting from the processor via electronic transmission a price based upon the resource cost.

38. (Original) A method for offering products, comprising:
providing a set of available product data records in a memory, each available product data record containing a specification for an associated available product;
providing a set of variance data records in the memory, each variance data record containing an allowed variance to an associated available product;
displaying the set of available product data records and the set of variance data records on a visual display;
receiving an input, via a user interface selection device, of a user selection from the set of variance data records.

39. (Currently Amended) A memory structure implemented in a computer system, comprising:

a read/write memory device coupled to the computer system providing the memory structure;

an available product list implemented in the read/write memory and associated with available products that can be ordered from a given provider;

an unavailable product/attribute selector implemented in the read/write memory allowing selection of products/attributes that cannot be ordered not currently available from a the given provider.

40. (Original) The memory structure of claim 39, wherein the unavailable product/attribute selector is an unavailable product/attribute list.

41. (Original) The memory structure of claim 38, wherein the unavailable product/attribute selector comprises an unavailable product/attribute request form.